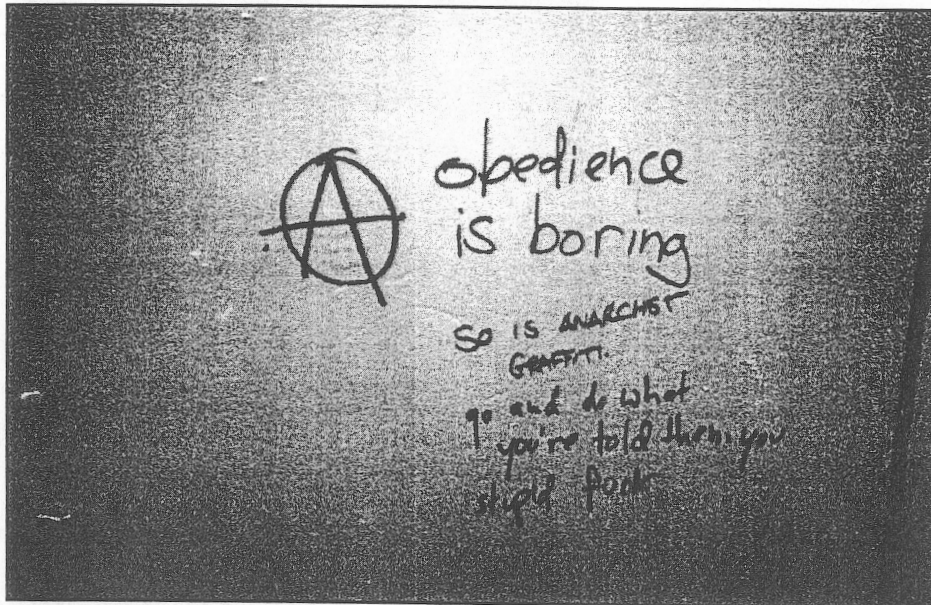


class struggle

NEWSLETTER OF THE SYNDICALIST EDUCATION UNION - LA TROBE UNI, BUNDOORA
17 MAY 2001, NUMBER 1

WE ARE BEING ROBBED!



MOST people will spend most of their lives working for someone else.

Obviously our work will make money for our boss. And obviously we'll get some money back as wages. The fair thing would be if we got paid what our work was worth. If we made \$100 for the business, our work is worth \$100. So that would be a fair amount to pay us.

But if that happened, then the boss wouldn't make any money out of us.

So what they'll do is pay us less than the fair amount - less than what our work is worth, or in other words less than what we make for the business.

One of my friends who worked in a call centre was told that every time someone called in sick, that cost the business \$1000. That means that her work was worth about \$5000 a week. Of course she wasn't getting \$5000 a week, or anything like it.

Say we get \$600 a week before tax. Our work is probably worth at least \$6000 profit for our employer, less our \$600 wage.

In other words, they don't pay us \$600. We pay them \$5400, for the privilege of working for them! To put it another way - we probably earn our pay by lunchtime on Monday. The rest of the week we're being ripped off.

This is a great system if you're a boss. You get to make money out of other people's work. You also get to be important and tell people what to do. It's not so good if you're a worker like most people. We get to spend most of our life working, we get to be told what to do for the whole time, and we get to be robbed every time we go to work.

If you don't think this is fair, then get in touch with us.

We're anarcho-syndicalists, which means we think everyone ought to have an equal say in things which affect them, and an equal right to contribute to society and share in the benefits: under anarchism there'd be no government, no rich or poor, no unemployment, and no discrimination.

About the SEU



The Syndicalist Education Union was formed on 18 March 2000 by members of the Melbourne ASF studying at the Bundoora campus of La Trobe University, in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. At a meeting of the Melbourne ASF local soon after it was sponsored as a provisional affiliate to the ASF, to be ratified at the congress in June.

The purpose of the SEU, as it has been discussed so far, is to bring education workers and students together to practise solidarity, direct action and cooperative decision-making according to the principles of anarcho-syndicalism.

The creation of the SEU at La Trobe has thus far met with an extremely positive and friendly response. To add to the bright picture, the creation of a second SEU branch at the Clayton campus of Monash University seems likely to take place in the not too distant future.

Activities that the La Trobe branch of the SEU plans for the near future include the publication of a newsletter, the creation of a dossier containing information relating to the current state of the education sector, affiliation to Clubs and Societies, and the production of literature related to the Free Schooling ideas developed by the Spanish free educationalist, Francisco Ferrer Y Guardia.

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what is the modern school?



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THE whole value of education consists in respect for the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties of the child. As in science, the only possible demonstration is demonstration by facts; education is not worthy of the name unless it be stripped of all dogmatism, and unless it leaves to the child the direction of its powers and is content to support them in their manifestations. But nothing is easier than to alter this meaning of education, and nothing more difficult than to respect it. The teacher is always imposing, compelling and using violence; the true educator is the man who does not impose his own ideas and will on the child, but appeals to its own energies.

From this we can understand how easily education is conducted, and how light is the task of those who seek to dominate the individual. The best conceivable methods become in their hands so many new and more effective means of despotism. Our ideal is that of science; we appeal to it in demanding the power to educate the child by fostering its development and procuring a satisfaction of its needs as they manifest themselves.

We are convinced that the education of the future will be entirely spontaneous. It is plain that we cannot wholly realise this, but the evolution of methods in the direction of a broader comprehension of life and the fact that all improvement involves the suppression of violence indicate that we are on solid ground when we look to science for the liberation of the child.

Is this the ideal of those who actually control the scholastic system? Is this what they propose to bring

about? Are they eager to abandon violence? Only in the sense that they employ new and more effective methods to attain the same end—that is to say, the formation of individuals who will accept all the conventions, all the prejudices, and all the untruths on which society is based.

We do not hesitate to say that we want men who will continue unceasingly to develop; men who are capable of constantly destroying and renewing their surroundings and renewing themselves; men whose intellectual independence is their supreme power, which they will yield to none; men always disposed for things that are better, eager for the triumph of new ideas, anxious to crowd many lives into the one life they have. Society fears such men; you cannot expect it to set up a system of education which will produce them.

What, then, is our mission? What is the policy we must adopt in order to contribute to the reform of the school?

Let us follow closely the work of the experts who are engaged in the study of the child, and let us endeavour to find a way of applying their principles to the education we seek to establish, aiming at an increasingly complete emancipation of the individual. But how are we to do this? By putting our hand energetically to the work, by promoting the establishment of new schools in which, as far as possible, there shall rule this spirit of freedom which, we feel, will colour the whole education of the future.

We have already had proof that it leads to excellent results. We can destroy whatever there is in the actual school that savours of vio-

lence, all the artificial devices by which the children are estranged from nature and life, the intellectual and moral discipline which has been used to impose ready-made thoughts, all beliefs which deprave and enervate the will. Without fear of injury we may place the child in



Francisco Ferrer,
founder of the
Modern School

a proper and natural environment, in which it will find itself in contact with all that it loves, and where vital impressions will be substituted for the wearisome reading of books. If we do no more than this, we shall have done much towards the emancipation of the child.

Francisco Ferrer, *The Modern School*

"EDUCATION IS NOT WORTHY OF THE NAME UNLESS IT BE STRIPPED OF ALL DOGMATISM, AND UNLESS IT LEAVES TO THE CHILD THE DIRECTION OF ITS POWERS AND IS CONTENT TO SUPPORT THEM IN THEIR MANIFESTATIONS. BUT NOTHING IS EASIER THAN TO ALTER THIS MEANING OF EDUCATION, AND NOTHING MORE DIFFICULT THAN TO RESPECT IT. THE TEACHER IS ALWAYS IMPOSING, COMPELLING AND USING VIOLENCE; THE TRUE EDUCATOR IS THE MAN WHO DOES NOT IMPOSE HIS OWN IDEAS AND WILL ON THE CHILD, BUT APPEALS TO ITS OWN ENERGIES."

